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C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 003028

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: ARAB LEAGUE ENVOY TO IRAQ ON ARAB DIPLOMACY EFFORTS

Classified By: Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: On August 18 the Ambassador met with Arab League Ambassador Mokhtar Lamani. Lamani expressed frustration with Arab diplomatic efforts and asked for USG assistance to get Lamani's report on the agenda for the September 4 Arab League meeting. He encouraged the USG to establish a dialogue with Harith Al-Dari (Association of Muslim Scholars). He also asked for housing in the International Zone due to recent security incidents at the Arab League compound in the Red Zone. End summary.

Frustration with Arab Diplomacy Efforts

¶2. (C) Expressing what he said was his personal opinion rather than the Arab League opinion, Lamani criticized Arab leaders for having "no vision" of the future of the region. Instead, he posited, they engage in "reactive diplomacy." He said it is a "shame" on Arabs that faraway Japan is donating money for Iraq reconstruction while Iraq's Arab neighbors are not. In response to the Ambassador's query, Lamani said that the key Arab players in Iraq are the neighboring Arab states and Egypt. He said that these states were the ones that could move the Arab League to take action on building the new Iraq. The Arab League conference on Iraq will occur, but no date has yet been established. The preparatory committee remains open for further action on the conference issue.

September 4 Arab League Meeting

¶3. (C) Lamani said that he could present a report to the September 4 Arab League meeting if it is put on the agenda by a member state. The Ambassador responded that the USG can encourage placing this issue on the agenda.

Harith al-Dari Dialogue?

¶4. (C) Lamani asked why the USG is not talking to Harith Al-Dari (secretary general of the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq) when the USG seems to be talking with everyone else. Lamani added that he might be seeing Al-Dari soon in Amman.

International Zone Housing Request

¶5. (C) Lamani said that the Arab League mission in the Red Zone has experienced several disturbing incidents recently.

He said that three Toyota Land Cruisers recently came to the compound. The occupants falsely claimed that they had a meeting at the compound and they were turned away. Lamani's secretary received a suspicious phone call inquiring about

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Lamani's schedule. At the same time, the security officers who were previously stationed in the neighborhood have been removed, leaving the compound vulnerable to attack. Lamani said that he would like to move the Arab League delegation into the International Zone. The Ambassador responded that he could refer this request to the International Zone Housing Committee for its consideration.

KHALILZAD